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Here's a short pollution story I have shared several times in my life: When I was a kid I have a vivid memory standing in a spot overlooking the cityscape from where some of my family lived in Los Angeles. The brown smog made my childhood asthma act up and made it very hard for me to breathe I couldn't believe people would accept living like that—and somewhere along the line, the decided enough was enough. Years and years later, I returned to the same overlook and saw blue skies—and mountains. As a kid, I had no idea the mountains were there. California made incredible improvements to their environment in my lifetime. That gives me a lot of hope for all of us on this tiny blue dot in the universe. A lot of folks don't see the pollution in the Chicago area or the East St. Louis area like I did as a kid in California because Los Angeles held all that brown and yellow smog coming out of combustion engines like a bowl, but it most certainly is there. The fact that the pollution rises up from Illinois areas in need of decarbonization doesn't mean it is less toxic. Nearly everyone lives near a roadway and though it is not always visible, vulnerable people feel the true cost of toxic emissions.

In my informed opinion, solar, wind, and other green energy infrastructure to make electricity more reliable exists at a level that can improve the quality of life for people right now. It is possible to deliver energy to ratepayers that is carbon-free if they are hooked up to the grid. Ratepayers and EV drivers themselves have the choice to supply themselves with their own desired amounts of power if they use renewable energy and utility programs that reward use after or before peak hours when demand is higher—many people now sell their energy back to their utility company. When it comes to transportation, electrification of fleet vehicles, emergency vehicles and delivery vehicles have helped visibly reduce pollution. This is a time to refocus on health outcomes related to internal combustion engine greenhouse gas emissions that harm people and our environment.

People deserve to get the electricity they pay for to get themselves from point A to point B without further contributing to an unsustainable toxic fuel industry that has held our economy hostage since the 1970s. Petrodollars have influenced every part of our daily lives and made us less healthy along the way for nearly 50 years. International economic interdependence of fossil fuel exporters and importers depend on a constant flowing volume of U.S. dollars. If our money is the global currency, then fossil fuel oil trade must make investments in the people and environment we valuable above all—and our Illinois government can deliver better outcomes with our collective resources because it is the moral action to take for people now and generations from now.

Thanks you for listening to my experience and my thoughts.

Aaron Tebrinke